

Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: John Stufflebean

**SUBJECT: 2008 SPECIAL EVENT AND VENUE
RECYCLING REPORT**

DATE: 01-20-09

Approved



Date

1/21/09

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend that the following be placed on the February 24, 2009, Council Agenda for discussion, with the following recommendations:

- 1) Accept this staff report on key special event and venue recycling accomplishments and opportunities for improvement; and
- 2) Effective May 1, 2009, require special events with over 1,000 attendees to specify that food vendors use # 1 (PET) plastic recyclable beverage containers for that event as a condition of their Event Authorization.

OUTCOME

Approval of this recommendation would assist staff to continue developing sustainable model programs that improve waste reduction at City events and venues. These programs support City goals including: City's Green Vision Goals# 1 and 5, Urban Environmental Accords Actions 4, 5 and 6, and the Zero Waste goal. In addition, the programs provide the public a model for best recycling practices. Large venues and events generate substantial quantities of solid waste, primarily compostable materials such as food waste, and recyclable materials such as beverage containers, corrugated cardboard, paper, and glass. Implementation of this recommendation would support efforts to increase recycling and composting these waste streams, and keep them out of landfills.

BACKGROUND

At its June 19, 2007 meeting, Council established several requirements for any event that has 1,000 attendees or more and which occurs on City property, streets, and/or park land. Event organizers are required to allow San Jose Conservation Corps (SJCC) access to their event to provide recycling services.

On November 19, 2007, Council directed staff to implement zero waste programs at the five largest special events; Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day, San Jose Jazz Festival, Tapestry Arts Festival, and Italian Family Festa. The organizers are required to use compostable or #1 recyclable cups for events greater than 30,000 attendees, and staff created a certification program to recognize green events in the city, developed resources for event organizers to help green their events, and evaluated opportunities for increased recycling at city venues, including specialized off-site processing and composting of waste. As part of Council action, staff was directed to evaluate these efforts and report to the Transportation and Environment Committee following the first year of implementation.

ANALYSIS

EVALUATION OF LARGE EVENT RECYCLING PILOT

During Summer 2008, staff implemented zero waste programs at five large San Jose events as part of a pilot program approved by the City Council in November 2007. The table below presents event statistics and diversion results.

Statistics and Results - 2008 Zero Waste Events

	<u>Cinco de Mayo</u>	<u>Independence Day</u>	<u>Jazz Festival</u>	<u>Tapestry</u>	<u>Italian</u>
Event Dates:	May 4	July 4 - 6	August 8 - 10	August 30 - September 1	September 27 - 28
# of Attendees:	70,000	60,000	80,000	120,000	50,000
Crew Size*:	25 people/day	32 people/day	65 people/day	38 people/day	27 staff/day
Total Discards:	5.87 tons	11.99 tons	13.99 tons	6.92 tons	4.84 tons
Total Materials Diverted**:	2.6 tons	8.41 tons	12.91 tons	5.94 tons	3.74 tons
Diversion Levels:	44%	70%	93%	86%	77%

*Crew size indicates the average daily number of ESD, SJCC, and contractor staff that provided recycling and composting coordination and services at each event.

**Materials Diverted at 2008 Zero Waste Events: Cardboard, Bottles, Cans, Mixed Paper, Paper Towels, Food scraps, Food Soiled Paper, Food Serviceware

To ensure success of the Zero Waste Pilot Program, Environmental Services Department (ESD) staff provided the following services for each of the five events:

- Communication with event organizers and contractors and the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) to arrange zero waste infrastructure needs prior to events
- Purchase of compostable products for all event food vendors

- Coordination, order processing, inventory management, and delivery of compostable food serveware products to event food vendors
- Set-up 40-80 eco-stations (compost, recycling, and trash collection bins) at each event, including development of "what goes where" signage
- Conducted audits of materials collected
- Contracted with SJCC to collect and remove all recyclable materials
- Contracted with contractor to sort materials collected to remove contaminants
- Coordinated all zero waste activities on site

ESD staff and interns spent over 1,500 hours to provide the zero waste services and coordination outlined above. Compostable product costs totaled approximately \$60,000, eco-station and related supplies totaled \$57,750, and an additional \$60,000 was allocated for contractor support of the program.

Summary of Key Accomplishments

The collection of food scraps, compostable food serveware, and recyclables significantly increased the diversion rates for the Zero Waste pilot events in 2008 compared to events with collection of recycling only. In addition to diversion of 33.6 tons of material from landfill, or 77% of the materials generated at the five events, the zero waste pilot program also accomplished the following:

- Extensive and positive media coverage of the City's Zero Waste pilot program and Green Vision goals
- Increased public awareness of recycling and sustainable resource management
- Development of a San Jose Green Event Certification program
- Creation and utilization of consistent public educational signage and eco-stations (set of compost, recycling, and trash containers) presentation
- Use of a Solar energy powered stage at the Comcast Jazz Festival
- Launch of the City Special Event and Venue Greening website and resources
- Established effective partnership and collaboration between ESD, OCA, and community event planners
- Additional opportunities for SJ Conservation Corps to participate in City programs
- Positive feedback on the program from event staff and food vendors
- Increased interest in the use of compostable food serveware by food vendors and event planners

The SJCC provides beverage container recycling for San Jose businesses, City Facilities, and special events. Their involvement with special events allows recovery of recyclable beverage containers that would otherwise be landfilled. SJCC staff, on behalf of the City, was integral to the success of the Zero Waste Pilot program. The pilot program provided additional work for 11 to 50 SJCC staff per event, provided an opportunity for corps members to learn about compostable products, created a knowledge base in relation to these materials for the San Jose community, and allowed the City to capture beverage containers and plastics for recycling.

In addition to the five zero waste events, the SJCC provided recycling services to events with 1,000 attendees or more on behalf of the City, which created additional work opportunities for their members. The additional events served included: Fiestas Patrias Parade Festival, Almaden Valley Art & Wine Festival, San Jose Gay Pride Celebration and Parade, Mariachi Festival, Rock N' Roll Half Marathon, San Jose Holiday Parade, Christmas in the Park, and several others.

Action 9 of the Urban Environmental Accords, signed by the City in 2005, calls for the City to create environmentally beneficial jobs for low-income residents. The SJCC has been one of the City's most successful partnerships in this arena. The SJCC has provided event recycling services at no or very low cost to the City. ESD staff plans to renew and expand the zero waste program contract with SJCC for 2009-2010.

Summary of Improvement Opportunities

Based on work conducted at the 2008 Zero Waste pilot program events and feedback gathered from stakeholders, ESD identified opportunities for improvement

Require use of #1 PET recyclable cups at events with attendance of 1,000 or more

City permit conditions prohibit the use of bottles or cans at events, resulting in the generation of approximately 100,000 cups at a typical large event. Upon approval of City Council in June 2007, the City required use of recyclable or compostable beverage containers at events with over 30,000 attendees so cups could be recycled or composted. Due to a greater available market to recycle #1 plastics versus #2-#7 plastics, the policy required event organizers selecting plastic cups to utilize #1 plastic cups for events. This policy was easy to implement and embraced by event organizers.

ESD staff evaluated this policy during the first year of the pilot program and found that the use of both compostable and plastic cups at events was confusing for attendees and increased contamination of both the compostables and recycling streams collected. Since the compostable PLA (poly lactic acid or "plastic look alike") cups look like plastic, event attendees incorrectly placed these products in the recycling containers instead of compost containers.

Rather than change this behavior, we want to encourage and enable the recycling of plastic. In addition, #1 PET recyclable cups are readily available in the marketplace at lower costs than PLA compostable cups, ensuring greater event and food vendor participation in relation to this requirement. The fiscal impact of such a requirement on the vendors is neutral or positive. Based on information provided by beverage suppliers, recyclable #1 plastic cups cost about the same as other plastic cups. The plastic cups are less expensive than alternative, compostable PLA cups.

Expand acceptable compostable food serviceware to include lower cost paper products

Based on the past year's experience, the City's compost processor is now willing and able to accept and process non-coated and lightly-coated paper products, such as Dixie™, Solo™ and Chinet™ brands. Many paper products can be composted and the cost for paper products is

typically 15% to 40% lower than similar products marketed as compostable. Paper food serviceware products are readily available at local stores and suppliers. The reduced cost and increased availability of paper products for event organizers and vendors will eliminate a barrier in producing zero waste events that will likely translate into greater participation in the green event program.

Evaluate banning the use of Polystyrene (Styrofoam™) food serviceware at San Jose events in 2010

Polystyrene food serviceware products cannot be recycled or composted. Due to its low cost, it is still widely used by event planners and vendors outside the Zero Waste pilot program. By banning the use of polystyrene the City will significantly reduce non-recoverable waste generated by events. A ban on this material would also be in line with the Cities Keep It Clean! Partnership memo approved by San Jose City Council in October 2008. Staff will evaluate the impact of such a ban as well as the availability of non-foam based food serviceware during the 2009 event season.

Provide training and workshops on “greening” events that are open to the public

In order to expand participation in the green event program without increases in City staff time and costs, education and public outreach is required. Training and workshops will allow a transfer of greening principles and knowledge from staff to a large number of event planners and community members, who will then be equipped to produce green event on their own, and receive recognition for their efforts through our Green Event Certification Program. Greening guidelines and resources will be provided as part of the training and workshops.

Implement deposit/loan program for eco-station equipment

Many event organizers currently do not have access to compost collection containers and educational materials for events in San Jose. By making City eco-stations available to event organizations on a deposit/loan basis, more San Jose events will be able to divert compostables from the landfill without a significant increase in event production costs. Through this program, a greater number of San Jose events can seek and obtain Green Event Certification and recognition.

Expand services provided by San Jose Conservation Corps to San Jose events

Staff has identified additional event related tasks to be handled by the SJCC: set-up and teardown of eco-stations and collection of compost collected at eco-stations. This transfer of tasks from staff and interns will provide more hours for the SJCC members, and provide additional opportunities for job training for at risk youth in the City.

Expand public education component at zero waste events

Staff will work with events to place educational booths at each of the five Zero Waste events in 2009. This will increase the City's opportunity to interact with and educate the public about our zero waste event program, residential recycling program, and Green Vision goals.

Continue to engage with event stakeholders

Staff will continue to work closely with event stakeholders, provide clear program information prior to event dates, and obtain feedback from the OCA, San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, event planners, and food vendor staff to ensure success of the second year pilot program and smooth the transition to future program years.

ASSESSMENT OF LARGE VENUE RECYCLING

City Facilities Off-site Waste Sorting Program

Beginning in May of 2008, all waste from City facilities is sent to a state-of-the-art sorting facility in San Jose. The facility separates all recyclable materials and large bulky items from the waste, and composts the remainder of the material. This leading-edge program has given the city one of the best performing municipal programs in the nation, and has facilitated further greening efforts at several key city venues.

San Jose McEnery Convention Center

The Convention Center has made substantial progress in the area of recycling and compost collection. Implementation of strategic recycling and composting efforts, along with off-site sorting of waste, has resulted in a 2008 diversion rate of 68.6%, a significant improvement from the 2007 rate of 28.7%. During 2008, City staff assisted The Convention Center in implementing zero waste programs for two very large high profile events: nVidia's international conference in August and West Coast Green in September. These efforts resulted in a diversion rate of 85% for West Coast Green and 91% for the nVidia event. These changes are particularly important as more organizations look for "green" venues to hold their events. Significant accomplishments for 2008 include:

- The Convention Center is collecting pre-consumer food scraps from the kitchen areas to be processed into compost.
- All materials collected as waste and recycling are sorted at the Green Waste facility to recover recyclables and to compost organic-rich portions of the mixed waste stream.
- The Convention Center offers compostable food serviceware in lieu of traditional disposables, and provides collection of these materials as compost at an event's request.
- Recycling containers are distributed throughout the Convention Center common areas. (ESD purchased and provided 25 sets of eco-stations in 2008 for diversion of waste through event recycling and composting collection.)

Improvements for 2009 include expanding the collection of food scraps and compostable food serviceware to more events, standardization of containers and signage, and stronger communication to vendors regarding convention center waste and recycling program requirements. A dedicated facility staff person focused on event and venue waste diversion would greatly increase materials recovered at this venue.

San Jose Mineta Airport

In 2009, the San Jose airport solid waste management and recycling program made substantial improvements. In September 2007 the Facilities and Engineering Division of the Airport hired a Recycling Coordinator to evaluate the program and implement improvements. The dedicated work done in this area has helped to increase the recycling rate and decrease the total garbage bill, saving the airport over \$28,500 in hauling fees over the last year. Recycling setups were improved and made consistent throughout the terminals, and waste collection area improvements were made to facilitate staff and tenant recycling. Custodial staff was trained, and their feedback has been instrumental in implementing a successful program. Outdoor waste collection areas are now consistent. Each location has an area for trash, comingled recyclables (bottles, cans and mixed paper, etc.) and cardboard consolidation. The following are some of the results of the improvements.

- \$3,300 in payback from cardboard bale collection to date for January – October 2008
- Airport diversion increased from 8.8% in 2006 to 79% in 2008
- Total waste to landfill decreased 220 tons
- Total recycling increased 248 tons

In 2009, the airport expects to recycle over 85% of total waste generated at the airport in FY 2008-2009. Compostable or reusable service ware (dishes and silverware) is required in the new food service contract (began December 2008). All of this waste will be diverted through the off-site sorting program. A kitchen waste audit conducted November 2008 highlighted that 72% of kitchen waste is compostable and another 15% is recyclable. Airport staff will be implementing mandatory composting and recycling from kitchens and is working with ESD to determine the logistical infrastructure for the program.

Children's Discovery Museum

In April of 2008, City staff in partnership with the Children's Discovery Museum and Hope Services launched a zero waste program for the museum and its Kid's Café (operated by Hope Services). Public area recycling containers were provided throughout the museum, and disposable food serviceware was replaced with compostable materials for the Café. The result of these efforts has been an increase in waste diversion through public area recycling, as well as tremendous positive feedback from the public visiting the museum. The program not only serves to increase waste diversion at this key venue, but also targets a key audience: children and families in our community.

Target Venues for 2009

Staff plans to expand its venue efforts in 2009 by continuing to provide support to the locations already mentioned in this report, as well as extending the recycling efforts to new key venues throughout the City. Staff has begun conversations with the Tech Museum of Innovation and the Sharks Ice facility. Opportunities for improvement at the HP Pavilion will continue to be evaluated as a key venue in the City that generates large amounts of waste.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will provide regular evaluations of these initiatives as part of the Green Vision reporting and update process.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

None

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

The criteria below do not apply to this memo.

- ☐ **Criteria 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- ☐ **Criteria 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- ☐ **Criteria 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate Newspapers)**

Staff will continue to work closely with the OCA, to ensure that program requirements are communicated to event organizers, and to solicit program feedback.

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

January 20, 2009

Subject: 2008 Special Event and Venue Recycling Report

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COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with the Office of Economic Development; the City Attorney's Office; and City Manager's Budget Office; Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services; and the Airport.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

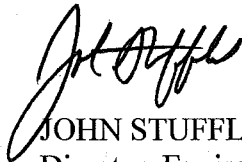
Costs for these programs are included in the Environmental Services Department's existing base budget in the Integrated Waste Management Fund.

BUDGET REFERENCE

N/A

CEQA

Not a project.



JOHN STUFFLEBEAN
Director, Environmental Services

For questions, please contact Jo Zientek, Deputy Director, Integrated Waste Management Division, at 408-535-8557